



M A R Y L A N D
TROOPERS
A S S O C I A T I O N



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September 15, 2005

Honorable Kevin Martin
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

IB Docket No. 05-221

Dear Chairman Martin:

Hurricane Katrina has demonstrated that our nation's Homeland security communications systems are susceptible to widespread failure in light of natural and other disasters. In every case of widespread failure of our land-based communications system, another form of communications is always available: satellite. However, very expensive user handsets and high service fees make today's satellite systems prohibitively costly for public safety agencies.

In my capacity as Executive Director of the Maryland Troopers Association, Inc., I think it is imperative that we facilitate a cost-effective, secure, widespread, and reliable public safety network. In order to overcome the high cost typically associated with mobile satellite systems, we are looking forward to the availability of advanced integrated satellite/terrestrial systems. An integrated network will allow a cell phone user to use a cell phone on existing cell towers or to use a satellite network if the cell phone network is inoperative.

Current licensees will be able to deliver both affordable commercial mobile satellite service ("MSS") to millions of Americans in rural and under served areas, and offer a "back-up" communications system should our current Homeland Security system fail. However, in order to provide both commercial service and act as a secondary communications system in the event of a communications failure, I believe current licensees must be given adequate bandwidth.

As you move forward with the distribution of spectrum, I urge the Commission to allocate 20 MHz of 2 GHz MSS spectrum on a pro rata basis to TMI/TerreStar Networks Inc., and ICO Satellite Services respectively. This communications solution would help to provide the last line of defense for any emergencies that could arise, natural or otherwise, in a cost effective and secure manner.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Devers
Executive Director

cc: Commissioner Abernathy
Commissioner Adelstein
Commissioner Copps
Secretary of the Commission

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